

Nov 2025

Agenda Item: 9, Presentation
Meeting Date: November 20, 2025
Page 1 of 21

Social Science Integration at the Council

Morgan Chow, Environmental Program Manager
Hollis Jones, PhD, Senior Environmental Scientist
Tara Pozzi, PhD, Social Science Extension Specialist



**Delta
Stewardship
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

What is social science?

The study of people.

- Economists, geographers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, etc.



Why do we need social science?

- Humans have a large impact on the biophysical world
- Their values, perceptions, and behaviors must be understood in any plan for land management.



Why do we need social science in the Delta?

- Humans are a central part of the Delta
- Deepening our understanding of the social dimensions of the Delta will allow for more robust, sustained solutions.



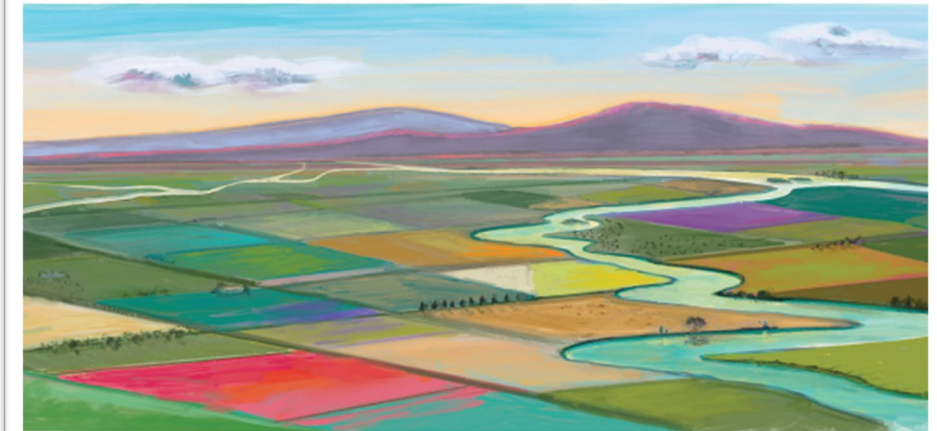
“Sparse and sporadic” –Delta ISB, 2017



Social Science Task Force 2020 Report

Findings:

1. There is a lack of social science **capacity and investment**
2. Research activities are ongoing, but there is no **long-term vision** for social science integration
3. The **adaptive management process is not informed** by the social sciences



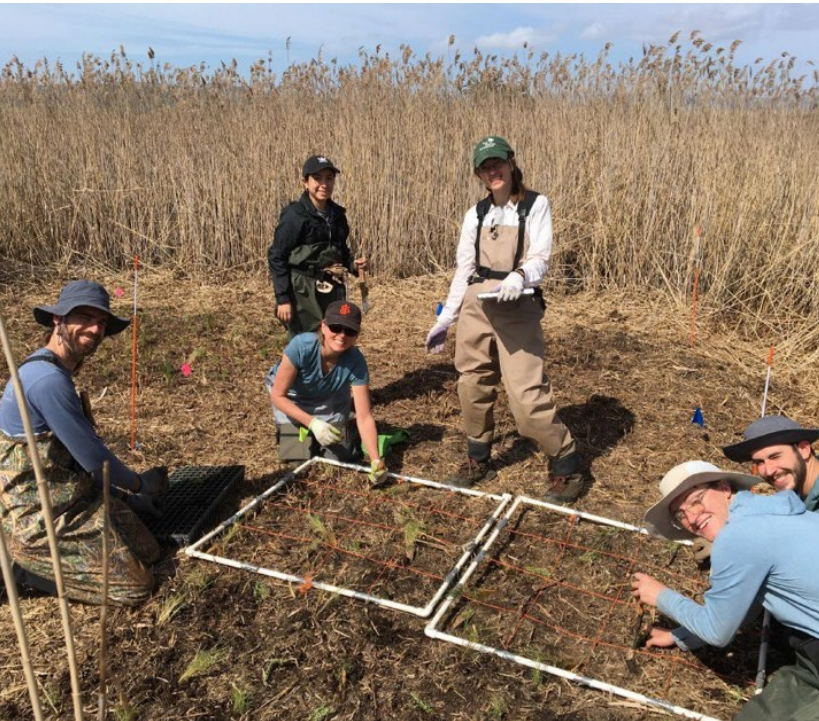
A Social Science Strategy for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

Delta Social Science Task Force
Kelly Biedenweg¹, Ph.D.
James N. Sanchirico² (Chair), Ph.D.
Holly Doremus³, Ph.D., J.D.
Robert Johnston⁴, Ph.D.
Josué Medellín-Azuara⁵, Ph.D.
Christopher M. Weible⁶, Ph.D.

March 2020



Progress Highlights From the Past 5 Years

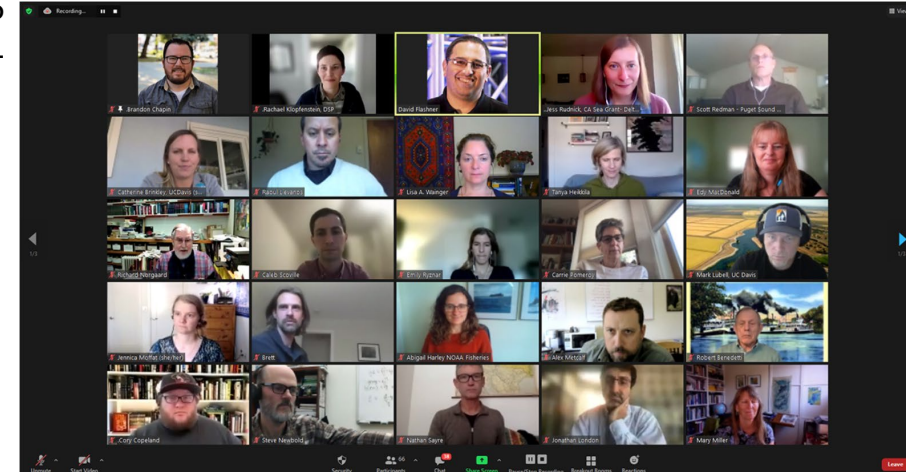


Finding 1: Building Capacity

Social Science Extension Specialist

The Bay-Delta Social Science
Community of Practice (CoP)

The Social Science Integration Team
(SSIT)



CoP group photo



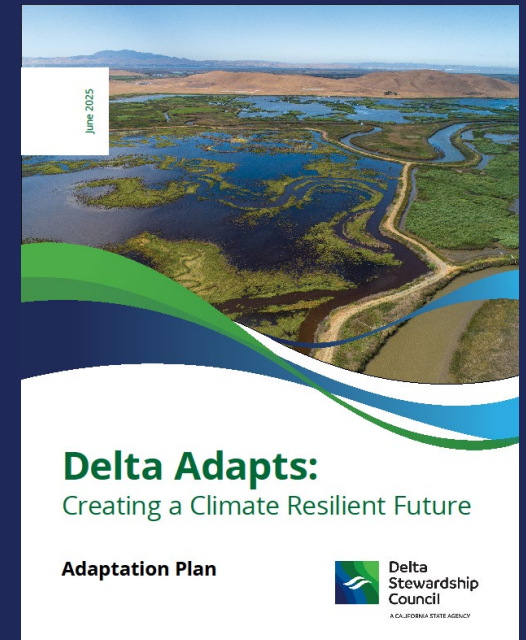
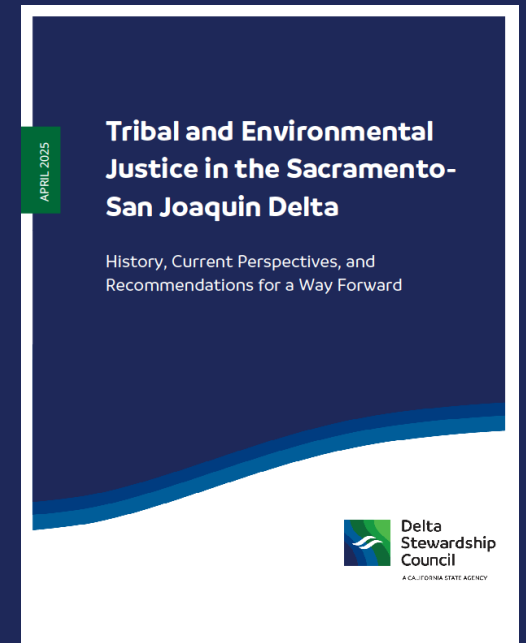
Dr. Jessica Rudnick
(Previous Social
Science Specialist)



Dr. Tara Pozzi
(Current Social
Science Specialist)

Progress Highlights – Finding 2

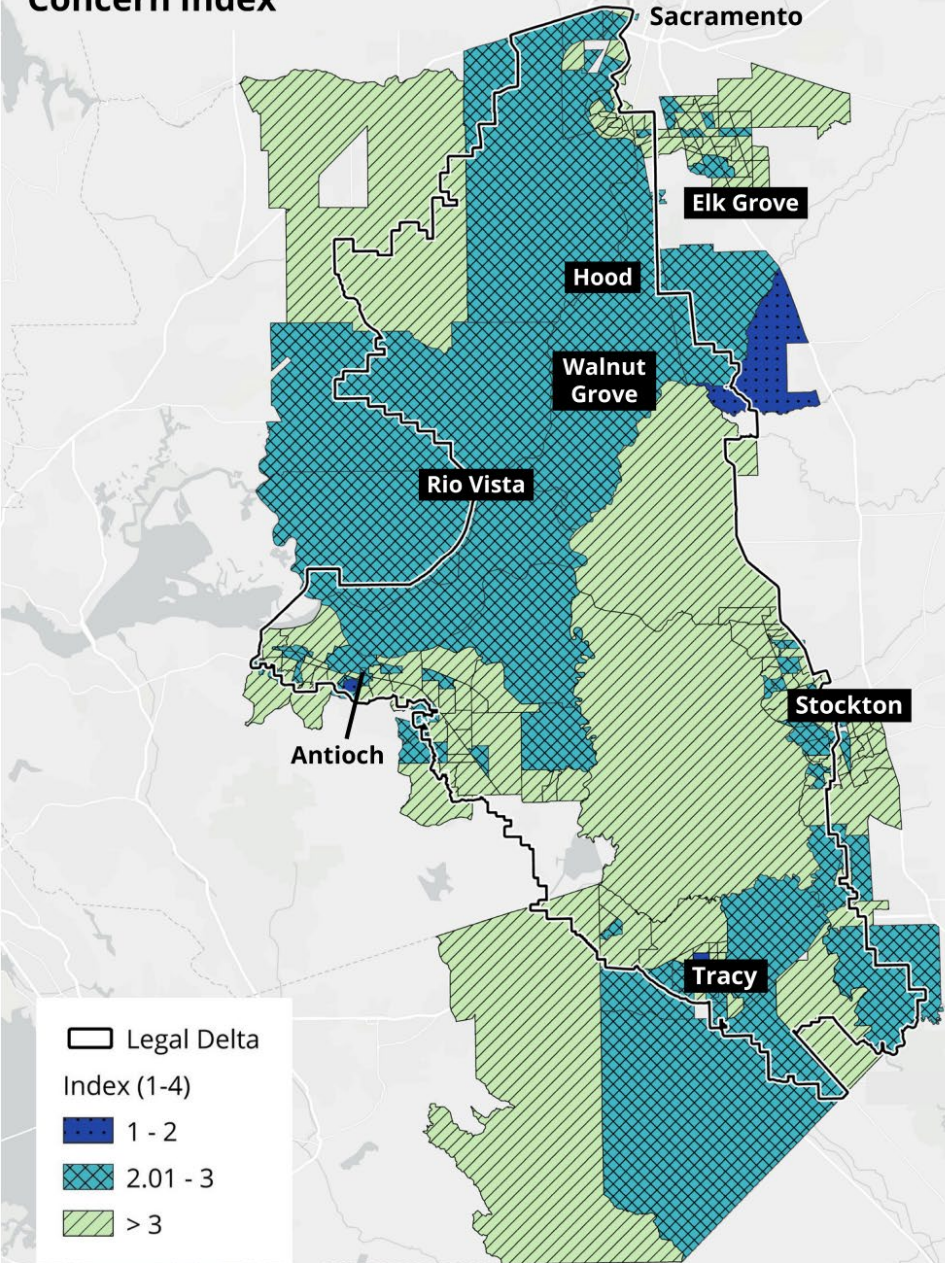
- Social Science **criteria** in research funding solicitations
- Council adoption of:
 - April 2025: Tribal and Environmental Justice (**TEJ**) in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Issue Paper
 - June 2025: **Delta Adapts**: Creating a Climate Resilient Future Adaptation Plan
- Draft 2026 **Delta Science Plan**
 - 3 draft actions
 - Resource: Making Science Whole: Embedding Social Science in Natural Science Workflows



Progress Highlights continued: Delta Residents Survey

- Assess Delta residents' subjective well-being
- Priorities, concerns, needs, and resources are varied; requiring targeted policy response

Overall Level of Climate Concern Index



Delta
Science
Program

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



Oregon State
University

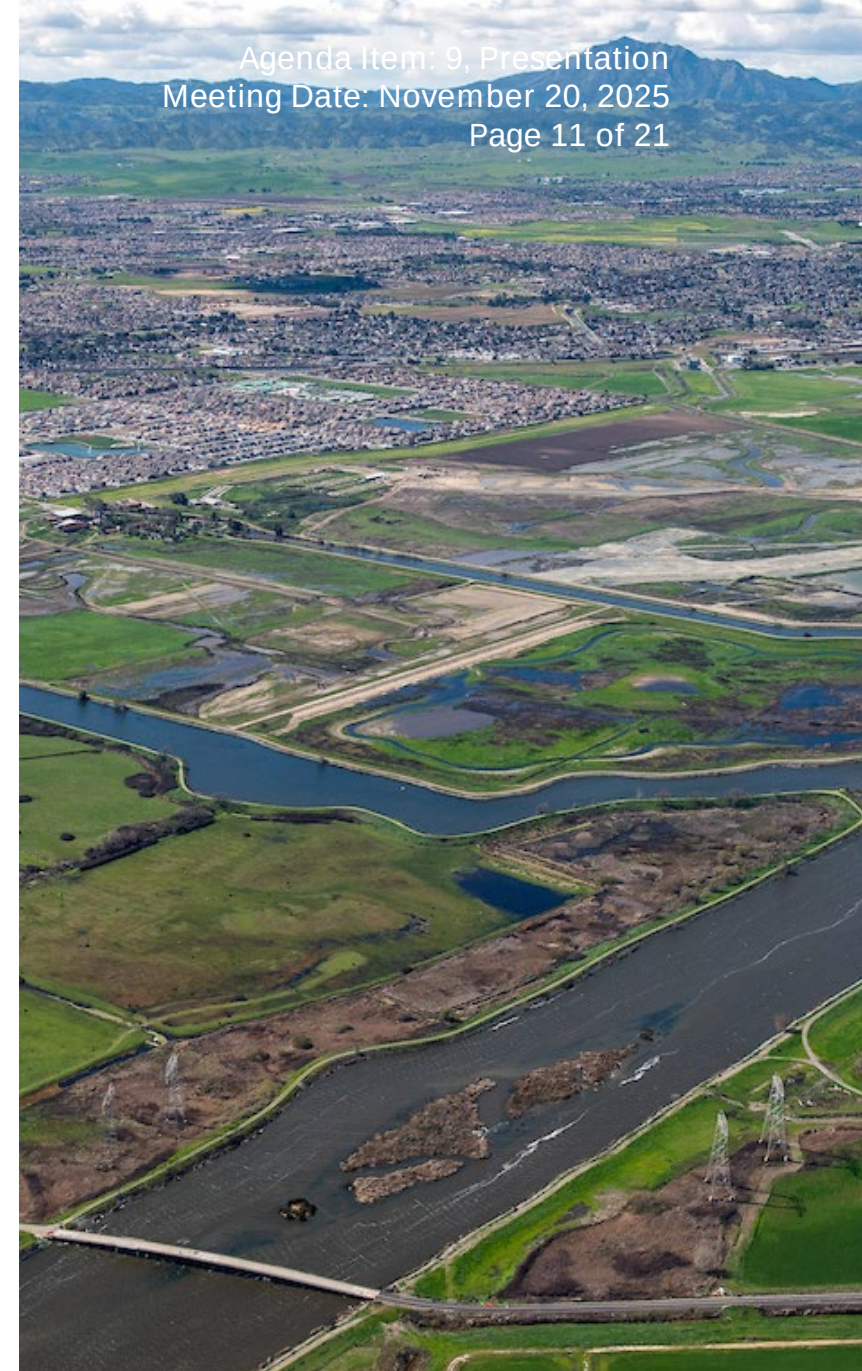
Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



SACRAMENTO
STATE



Looking Forward



Dr. Tara Pozzi

What kind of social scientist am I?

Primary Research

- Social-ecological science background
- Qualitative and quantitative methods
- Public scholarship



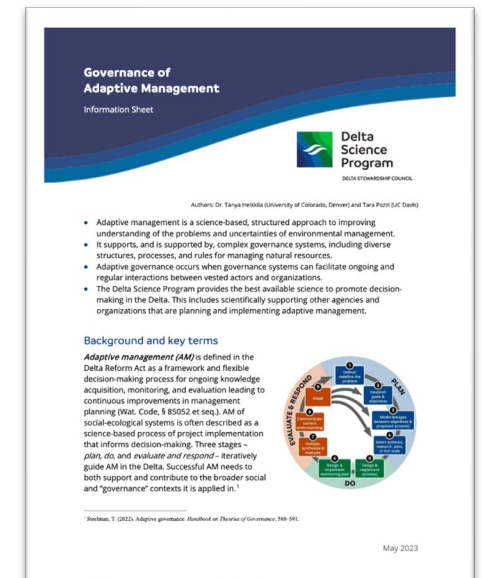
**Applied
Environmental
Social Scientist**

Policy Engagement

- Research for priority science and policy needs
- Participation in collaborative groups

Outreach & Education

- Teaching, mentorship, and guest lectures/presentations
- Workshop facilitation
- Accessible research materials



Social Science Extension Specialist Role



Delta
Stewardship
Council

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

Purpose: advance understanding about the human dimensions of resource management and support the application of social science into decision-making

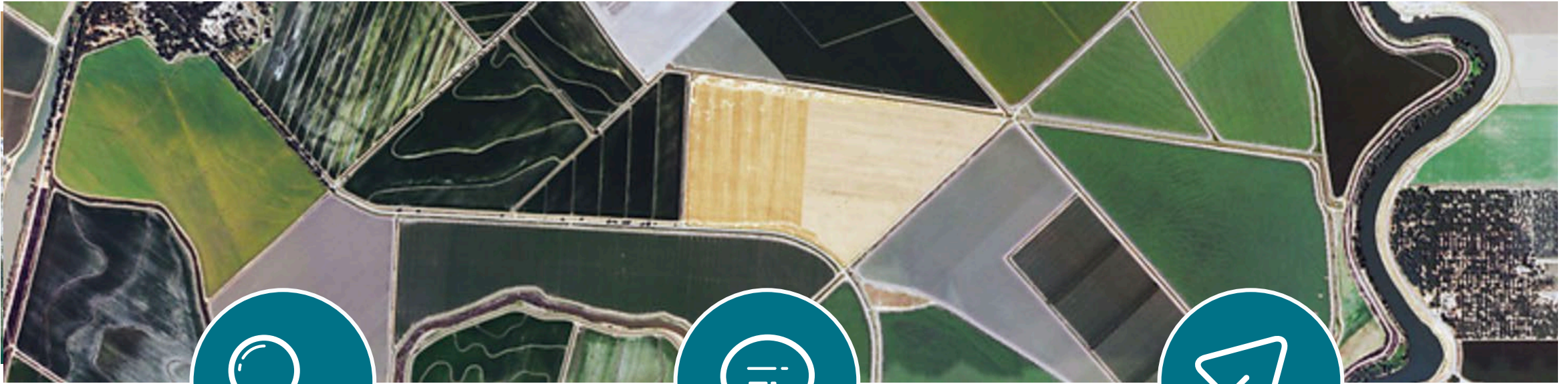
Responsibilities:

- Conduct relevant primary research on the human dimensions of the Delta
- Participate in social science related groups, boards, meetings as appropriate
- Facilitate collaborations
- Serve as an academic mentor

Situated at UC Davis



Research and Extension Program



**Adaptation
governance
and strategies**



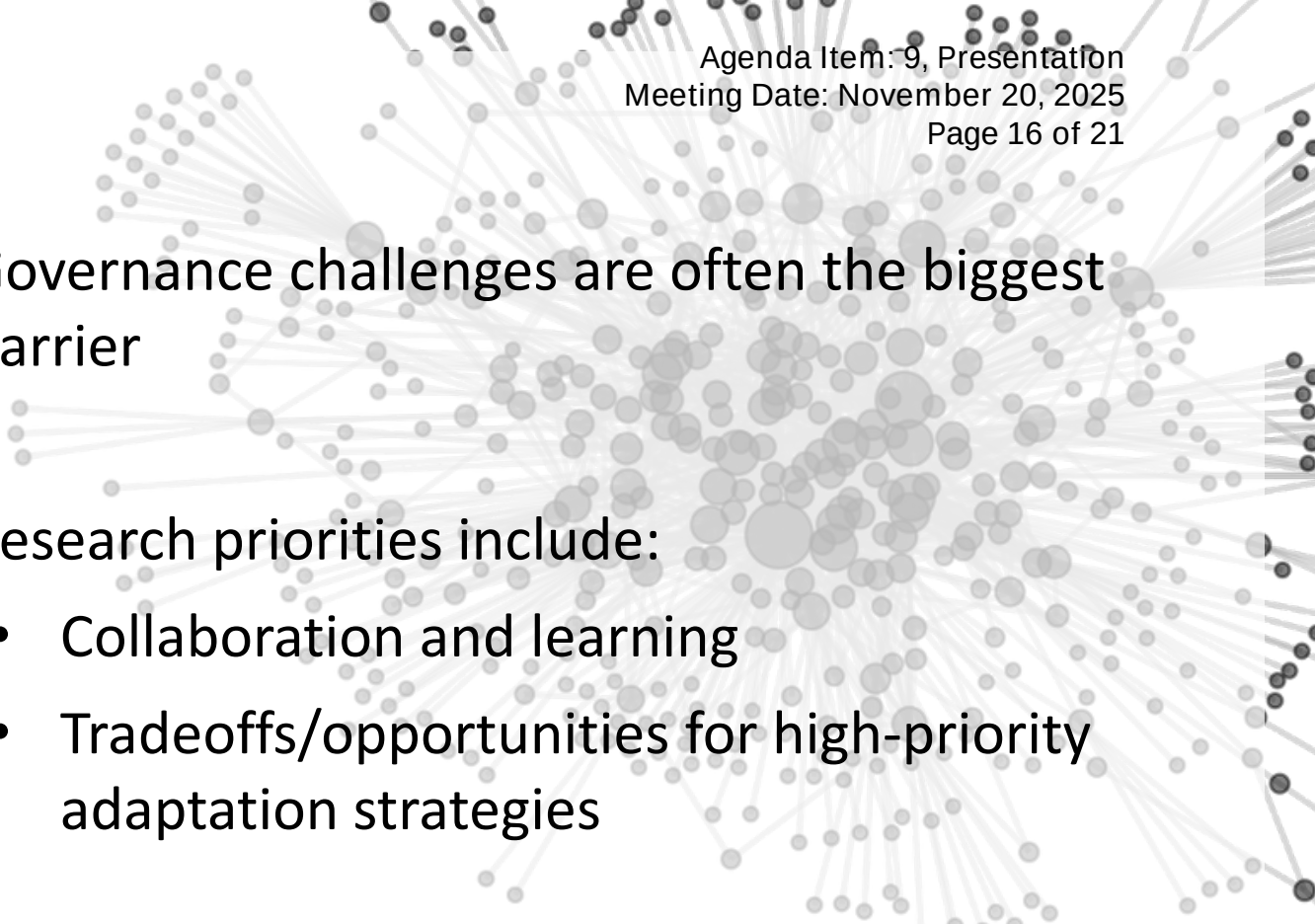
**Social well-
being and
resilience**



**Social
science
capacity**



Priority 1: Adaptation governance and strategies

- 
- Governance challenges are often the biggest barrier
 - Research priorities include:
 - Collaboration and learning
 - Tradeoffs/opportunities for high-priority adaptation strategies
 - Participation in collaborative groups like Delta Adaptation Working Group

Priority 2: Social well-being and resilience

- Understanding social well-being improves natural resource management
- Need to continue existing tracking efforts
- Research priorities include:
 - Second distribution of the Delta Residents Survey
 - Plan to support long-term monitoring of social well-being



**COMING SOON:
DELTA RESIDENTS
SURVEY (2027)**

Understanding Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta residents' livelihoods, well-being, priorities, and concerns for the region is necessary for developing balanced approaches to policy and management. The Delta Residents Survey provides a research tool to capture Delta residents' perspectives and needs.

In January 2023, invitations to participate in the survey will be sent via postal mail to all households in the interior Delta and a sample of households in the urban and suburban Delta. All survey respondents will be offered a **\$5 gift card** from California State University, Sacramento, as a token of gratitude for participating.

We need your help to ensure all communities are represented! Please share this survey announcement with your networks and encourage survey participation. To learn more, scan the QR code above or contact lead researcher Dr. Jessica Rudnick at jrudnick@ucsd.edu or (916) 902-6596.

This research is being conducted by a collaborative team across the University of California and California State University systems with funding from the Delta Science Program.



Priority 3: Social science capacity

Continue building on 5+ years of social science integration through:

Engagement

- DSC Social Science Integration Team
- Work groups

Workforce Development

- Teaching water policy
- Mentoring undergraduates
- Collaborative projects

Community Building

- Co-chair Bay-Delta Social Science Community of Practice

Evaluation and Impact

- Assessing value and impact of social science on coequal goals

Program Goals



Adaptation governance and strategies

- Better understanding of “good” governance
- Improved regional coordination



Social well- being and resilience

- Second Delta Residents Survey
- Plan to support long-term monitoring



Social science capacity

- More support for social science integration
- Vibrant community of practice

Thank you! Questions?

Contact information:

Tara Pozzi

Email: tpozzi@ucsd.edu

Website: tarapozzi.github.io

Thank you

Connect with us!



Subscribe to
receive our email
announcements
by scanning the
QR code



Deltacouncil.ca.gov



@DeltaCouncil



@deltastewardshipcouncil



Delta Stewardship Council



@deltastewardshipcouncil